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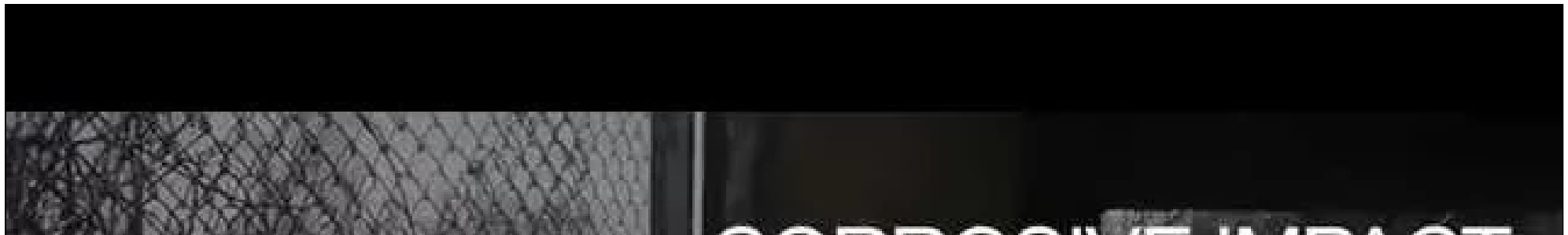


Leaked internal memo shows federal regulator's concerns about lead in Flint's water

By [LINDSEY SMITH \(/PEOPLE/LINDSEY-SMITH\)](#) • JUL 13, 2015

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An internal memo (<http://www.aclumich.org/sites/default/files/file/EPAWaterReport062415.pdf>) from the Environmental Protection Agency (<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/michigan/files/201602/Miguels-Memo.pdf>) is raising concerns about lead in Flint's water.

It documented extremely high levels at one woman's home, high enough that her son got lead poisoning. The memo was leaked before federal regulators had a chance to "verify and assess the extent" of the problem, according to an EPA spokesperson.

Representatives with the EPA declined an interview request Friday, but issued a written statement.

EPA continues to work closely with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the City of Flint to ensure that Flint residents are provided with safe drinking water. EPA conducted limited drinking water sampling for lead in Flint in response to a citizen complaint. The initial results and staff recommendations to management were documented in an internal memorandum, which was cited in the ACLU article. EPA will work with Michigan DEQ and the City of Flint to verify and assess the extent of lead contamination issues and to ensure that Flint's drinking water meets federal standards.

Flint residents who are concerned about lead in their drinking should contact the utility and may request that their water be sampled. Additional information about lead in drinking water is available at <http://water.epa.gov/drink/contaminants/basicinformation/lead.cfm> (<http://water.epa.gov/drink/contaminants/basicinformation/lead.cfm>).

Flint city officials declined to comment on the memo because they had not received a copy at the time.

“Let me start here – anyone who is concerned about lead in the drinking water in Flint can relax,” said Brad Wurfel, spokesman for Michigan’s Department of Environmental Quality.

He says preliminary tests of at least 170 homes in the past year show the woman’s home was an outlier. Wurfel says those reports should be finalized in a few weeks.

“It does not look like there is any broad problem with the water supply freeing up lead as it goes to homes,” Wurfel said.

Wurfel says anyone with a home that’s more than 30 years old should contact their city and get their water tested, no matter where they live.

Old homes sometimes have lead service connections with city water systems. Lead can get into drinking water that way, or through some old copper connections, which may have lead solder, Wurfel said.

The memo details an EPA staffer’s concern about how the city tests for lead and results from a lab at Virginia Tech that show elevated levels of lead at one resident’s home. That test shows levels that are high enough to be considered hazardous waste.

The memo was leaked by the American Civil Liberties Union, who spoke to the author.

(<http://www.aclumich.org/democracywatch/index.php/entry/corrosive-impact-leaded-water-and-one-flint-family-s-toxic-nightmare>)

The memo also cites concerns over whether tests at other Flint homes with elevated lead levels are being included in the broader water tests that Wurfel referenced.

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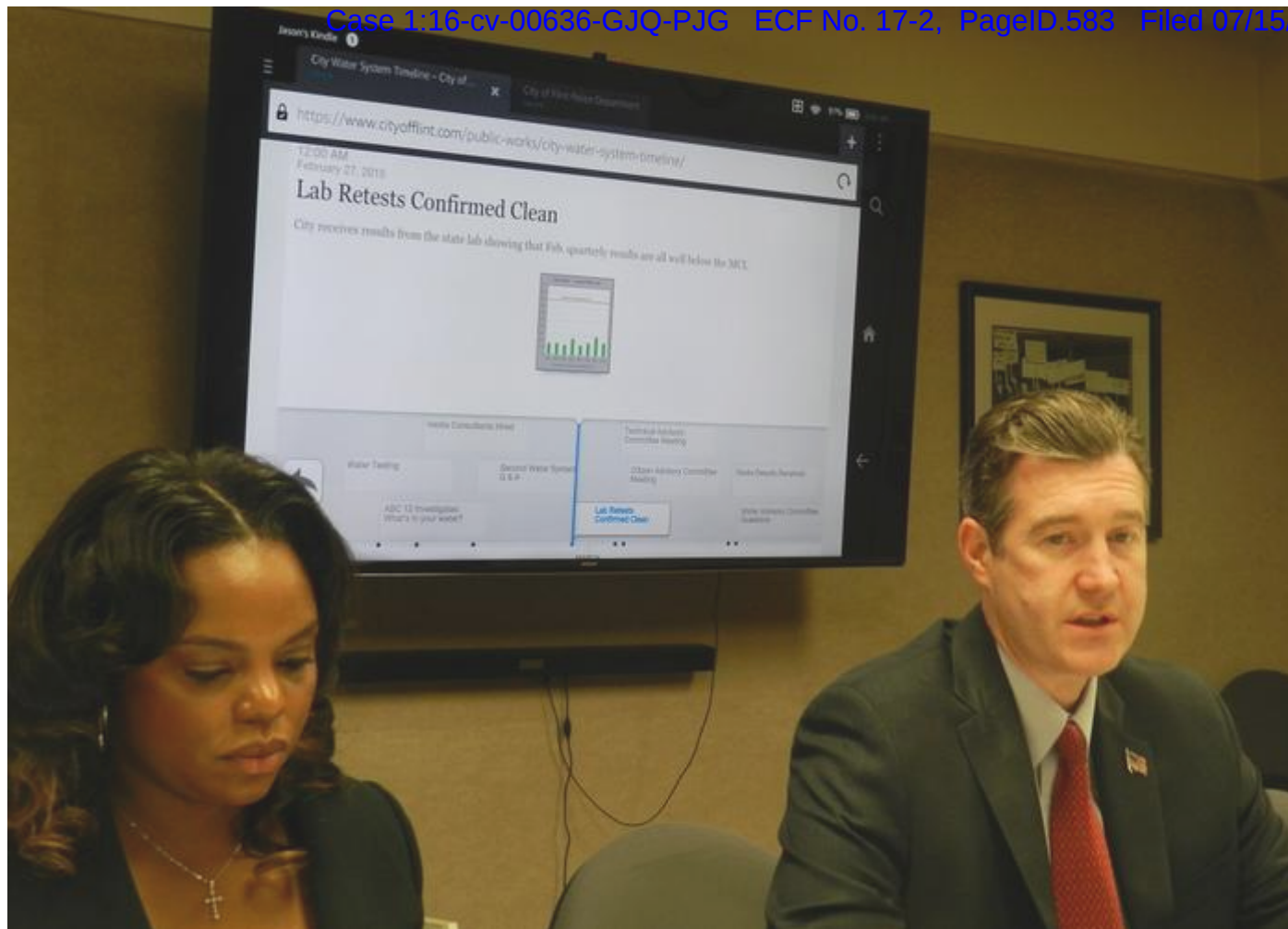
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